



Airfield Operations Specialists

LOGISTICS

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Job Overview

Airfield Operations Specialists play an important role in making sure flights are safe and on schedule. They monitor and coordinate aviation safety, security, airport access, facility management, noise abatement, environmental issues, and public relations activities in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. They use computers, calculators, weather charts, and communications equipment such as telephones and radios.

Airfield Operations Specialists originated as a military job classification. Also known as Flight or Aviation Operations Specialists, they prepare and provide flight information for air and ground crews.

Most Airfield Operations Specialists work for state or local government. A few work for commercial and private airlines, air transport companies, and couriers.

An Airfield Operations Specialist may also be called Airport Operations Specialist, Officer, Coordinator, Supervisor, or Manager. Other job titles include Airfield Operations Superintendent, Operations Agent or Manager, Airport Manager, Flight Follower, or Noise Officer.

Typical Tasks

- Coordinate with air traffic control, civil engineers, and command posts to ensure support of airfield management activities.
- Relay departure, arrival, delay, aircraft and airfield status, and other pertinent information to upline controlling agencies.
- Train operations staff.
- Procure, produce, and provide information on the safe operation of aircraft, such as flight planning publications, operations publications, charts and maps, and weather information.
- Coordinate communications between air-traffic control and maintenance personnel.
- Maintain air-to-ground and point-to-point radio contact with aircraft commanders.
- Monitor the arrival, parking, refueling, loading, and departure of all aircraft.
- Implement airfield safety procedures to ensure a safe operating environment for personnel and aircraft operation.

Airfield Operations Specialists

- ➔ Perform and supervise airfield management activities, which may include mobile airfield management functions.
- ➔ Plan and coordinate airfield construction.

*Detailed descriptions of this occupation may be found in the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) at online.onetcenter.org.*

Important Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities

- ➔ Reading Comprehension — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
- ➔ Critical Thinking — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
- ➔ Active Learning — Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.
- ➔ Monitoring — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
- ➔ English Language — Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- ➔ Customer and Personal Service — Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
- ➔ Transportation — Knowledge of principles and methods for moving people or goods by air, rail, sea, or road, including the relative costs and benefits.
- ➔ Public Safety and Security — Knowledge of relevant equipment, policies, procedures, and strategies to promote effective local, state, or national security operations for the protection of people, data, property, and institutions.
- ➔ Oral Comprehension — The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- ➔ Oral Expression — The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
- ➔ Problem Sensitivity — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
- ➔ Speech Clarity — The ability to speak clearly so others can understand you.

Work Environment

Airfield Operations Specialists usually work indoors in flight control centers or air terminals. They may also work outdoors and can be exposed to loud noise, fumes, and all weather conditions. They frequently work under pressure, especially during bad weather conditions or when aircraft have mechanical problems.

Since airports operate around the clock, Airfield Operations Specialists must be able to work rotating shifts, including evenings, weekends, and holidays. They usually work 40 hours a week.

Airfield Operations Specialists working for county airports may belong to the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees union or a local union specific to their area.

Airfield Operations Specialists

California's Job Outlook and Wages

The California Outlook and Wage table below represents the occupation across all industries.

Standard Occupational Classification	Estimated Number of Workers May 2005	2006 Wage Range (per hour)
Airfield Operations Specialists 53-2022	410	\$21.74 to \$33.69

Wages do not reflect self-employment.

Average annual openings include new jobs plus net replacements.

Source: www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov, Employment Projections by Occupation and OES Employment & Wages by Occupation, Labor Market Information Division, Employment Development Department.

Trends

According to national projections, employment growth for Airfield Operations Specialists is expected to be average compared with all other occupations.

Despite a recent slowdown in the airline industry, trends indicate that air travel will increase over the next decade as the economy expands and population grows. Cargo traffic is also expected to increase with the economy and growing world trade.

Training/Requirements/Apprenticeships

Airfield Operations Specialists require long-term on-the-job training. Nearly half of Airfield Operations Specialists have completed some college and over one-third have a bachelor's degree.

Most employers require two years of work experience in airport operations. Many prefer course work in aviation, a bachelor's degree in Aviation Management or a related field, or a combination of education and experience.

Possession of a California driver license (Class C or higher) and the ability to pass a security clearance investigation are required for employment. Drug testing may be a condition for employment and/or given on a random basis.

Airfield Operations Specialists should be able to handle emergency situations in a calm and effective manner. They should also have excellent customer service and good computer skills. Employers may also require that they have the ability to lift up to 40 lbs.

For positions in the military, job training includes 7 to 14 weeks of classroom instruction. It covers topics relating to aviation operations, such as scheduling aircraft and assigning air crews, flight planning and airfield operations, and preparing flight operations reports and records. Additional training takes place on the job and through advanced courses.

Recommended High School Course Work

High school students interested in this kind of work should take courses in mathematics, statistics, science, computer technology, and English.

Airfield Operations Specialists

Where Do I Find the Job?

Airfield Operations Specialists is a very small occupation. In California, positions are found primarily in State or local government. To explore job opportunities with the State of California, go to www.spb.ca.gov for information on exams or vacancies. For positions within local government, contact the city or county human resource departments in areas where you are interested.

Where Can the Job Lead?

With additional experience and/or education, Airfield Operations Specialists may promote to supervisory or managerial positions, such as airport operations supervisor, senior airport operations supervisor, assistant airport manager, or senior operations controller.

In the military, Airfield Operations Specialists start out keeping logs and typing schedules. With experience, they schedule air crews. They can eventually take on higher responsibilities and plan flight operations and supervise others. They may promote to Senior Flight Operations Specialists.

Related Occupations

Air Traffic Controllers (see Logistics Profile)

Flight Operations Specialists (Military)

Logisticians (see Logistics Profile)

Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers (see *Manufacturing Careers*)

Other Sources

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO
www.afscme.org

California Association of Regional Occupational Centers and Programs (CAROCP)
www.carocp.org

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
www.faa.gov

U.S. Air Force
www.airforce.com